

ALWAYS ON MY MIND

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SUMMARY: Draco has never been able to get Hermione out of his head. He sent her packing once and now that someone else and a new law are in the picture, all he wants is to have her back. (Marriage Law Fic.)

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Always On My Mind	2
Chapter 2: Meeting Again	4
Chapter 3: Smith is Out	7
Chapter 4: It's Not That Easy	9
Chapter 5: In Her Condition	12
Chapter 6: Finally Mine	14
Chapter 7: Wedding Day	17
Chapter 8: Starting from Scratch	20
Chapter 9: It's Coming	24
Chapter 10: He's here!	26
Chapter 11: The truth	29

Chapter 1: Always On My Mind

Draco sat in front of The Centaur sipping his beer, watching the May Day festivities. There was a band with live music, competitions and all the shops in Hogsmeade had their wares on tables in sunlight boasting sales. He was sitting in front of the new pub and talking with Blaise Zabini, his best friend since the age of twelve when he saw her back through the crowd. He'd know it anywhere. The familiar contours were well displayed by her cotton tank top and he watched as the little angle wings that were her shoulder blades poked out as she took out a hair stick and used it to secure her long ringlets into a semblance of a French twist. She shifted her weight and the skirt she wore swirled around her calves and something in Draco's heart twisted at the memory of seeing those calves on a regular basis. He excused himself from Blaise and rose to say hello to her. After all, it had been almost a year and a half since they'd broken up and over five months since they'd last spoken. She was currently dating Weasley, but he was confident it wouldn't last.

As he walked towards her he thought back to why they had broken up. At twenty six, Draco Malfoy was the most eligible bachelor in the wizarding society and he used that to his full advantage. The only time he'd been out of commission had been the two years he and Hermione had been together. At twenty three they had finally made a commitment to each other after sleeping together off and on for months at a time since their graduation from Hogwarts. Looking back, Draco realized that those two years had been the most relaxed in his life in his life. However, Draco Malfoy did not like to feel relaxed. He had to know what was on the other side and whether or not the grass was actually greener there. He'd broken it off with Hermione, moving out of their shared flat and back into the manor. He dated lots of women and enjoyed himself, but he never found that same sense of peace that he had when he was with Hermione. To say that she created a sense of peace didn't mean that their life together had been routine or dull; it just meant that he was certain that she wasn't with him because of his money, his connections or his looks. He could get a jar of acid thrown in his face, and Hermione would have loved his disfigured form as much as the chiseled face that got him so many women. Their relationship was often tumultuous and he loved it. She refused to back down if she felt she was in the right and she had the brains to verbally spar with him and back him in the corner. He missed her like crazy and was rather certain that she must miss him as well.

After all, Weasley never talked about books, only Quidditch and chess. She knew that they were wrong for one another; she'd figured it out her seventh year and run crying to him. His induction into the Order made him her confidante and her heartache made him her lover. She was the only one who knew him completely and he liked to think he was the same person for her. He hoped that she and the Weasel had already come to their breaking point and he wouldn't have to wait until it was over to get her back. The thought of her with another man made his blood boil, it always had. The only thing that kept him from going ballistic was the fact that he knew her heart would always belong to him, first and foremost.

He'd made his way through the crowd while holding his imported beer in one hand. He could hear her voice and he could smell the earthy scent of her favorite perfume through the breeze and it made his cock twitch at the memory of having her writhing underneath as they made up after an argument. She was standing in front of Weasley's Wizarding Wheezes talking to Neville Longbottom. As soon as Neville left, he put his hand on her shoulder, reveling in the silky touch of her skin. The second she turned around he stopped breathing and his glass hit the concrete with a crash, shattering it completely.

Hermione's eyes lit up the second she saw him and she threw her arms around him. "Draco! It's

so good to see you! How are you?" Her eyes danced with happiness, but Draco couldn't look at them. His eyes were glued to her five month pregnant belly.

Finding his voice, his words came out raw. "You're pregnant," he stated.

"Yes! Isn't it wonderful?" she asked. He could only nod dumbly. His head was spinning and he thought he was going to be sick. For the past nine years he'd thought of her as his girl and there she was, displaying quite loudly the fact that she belonged to another man now.

"Are you married?" he asked, trying to keep the desperation out of his voice. He wanted to hear all of it from her mouth.

"No, she said, rubbing her belly. "We weren't engaged before we found out so we're not going to rush things. We both couldn't be happier, though. Ron's ecstatic and he keeps treating me like I'm made out of glass. Are you okay?" Hermione looked at him concerned, touching his arm. He pulled away from her as if he'd been burned.

"Congratulations," he said before turning around and walking quickly away from a confused Hermione.

His steps sped up as he neared the table where he'd been sitting with Blaise and put two gold galleons down. "Are you alright, mate? You look like you've just seen a ghost." Blaise got up from talking to the redhead who had sat at the table next them, but Draco just pushed past until he reached the disapparation point. He closed his eyes and with a pop he was in Malfoy Manor.

He ran up the stairs to his study and slammed the door shut. Panting on the other side, he squinted his tear stained eyes and brought his knuckle to his mouth, biting it in an attempt to keep from crying. A low moan escaped his throat and he ran over to his desk and threw everything on it to the floor in a sweeping motion. He turned around to his business awards and picked up a glass one throwing it across the room watching it smash. He picked up everything within his reach and regardless of the value; he pitched it across the room to smash against the wall. When he was out of items he strode over to his book shelf and began pulling books out, throwing them around the floor, kicking them until he finally leaned against the wall, sliding downward until he sat on the floor. He put his head in his hands and cried.

She was pregnant. Ron Weasley was the father. Ron Weasley treated her like glass because HIS child was growing inside her womb. Draco leaned over and thought about the pain he was feeling and suddenly understood how people died of broken hearts. She was gone and he would never get a chance to call her his ever again. Weasley would do the honourable thing and ask her to marry him and because a child was involved, she would say yes. Once she was married, that would be it. Hermione was firmly against cheating and like the Gryffindor she was, she would be in it for the long haul and try to create a happy little family for her baby even if she didn't love the father. Suddenly, Draco felt cold. What if she did love Weasley? What if while he was off 'exploring his options' she had explored hers as well and found the red haired man to be more of a match for her. After all, when they had split she had told him that she wanted children and a family. He had told her he didn't know what he wanted. Looking back at the number of women he'd slept with over the past year, he suddenly felt cheap and shallow. Why would she want someone like him when she could have someone who only held out for the best, like Ron Weasley?

Thinking back to their encounter he teared up again as he realized that she hadn't been the least been thrown by seeing him. Always before, if she saw him unexpectedly, she would stop and take two seconds to compose herself. Today she had greeted him as if he were only one of her old housemates from school. He no longer held any sway over her heart or her emotions and he had been the one to throw it all away, to try and put her on a shelf, because he wanted a series of quick shags. He felt stupid and foolish and utterly ashamed. He'd traded gold for bronze. Once again thinking of how he'd told her that he didn't know what he wanted he thought of her radiantly beautiful face and the happiness splashing across it as she talked about her baby. He remembered the glow on her beautiful face and suddenly knew that what he wanted was for her to have that glow because of him. He wanted to be the reason her belly was full.

All Draco wanted was to start a family with Hermione and as he fell asleep on the floor of his study, cold and alone, he thought about the irony that all it took for him to be certain was to watch her start one with someone else.

Chapter 2: Meeting Again

Hermione sat in the tea shop looking across the street, but not focusing on anything. It had been six months. Six months since the happy life she had planned out came to a screeching halt. On May 13th, Ron Weasley, who had fought Voldemort, giants, vampires and death eaters had died from a muggle bullet wound. Ron, who had been her best friend since she was ten years old, wasn't there. He wasn't the only thing that wasn't there.

Twelve days after Draco had run from her as if she were on fire, she and Ron had gone into muggle London to visit her parents. They went to the theater and Ron insisted that they take the tube home. Like his father, he was thoroughly fascinated by all things muggle. The tube had been like riding a roller coaster for him. It was close to one a.m. and the two of them had been laughing their way up the stairs that led to the Grangers' street. Neither of them noticed the man hidden behind the corner until it was too late. He had black knit ski mask pulled down over his face and he had a gun pointed right at Ron's chest.

"Go on then, geezer, let's have your wallet." He said, looking around anxiously. Ron immediately pulled out his wand and pointed it at him. Hermione, being raised muggle, was instinctively more afraid of the gun than Ron's wand.

"What the fuck is that, then? You some kind of loony? Give me your fucking wallet!"

"Ron, just give him your money. It's not worth it." Hermione begged him nervously. Ron picked up his coin purse and threw it at the man while maneuvering himself in front of Hermione, shielding her body with his. The scruffy man picked up the purse and looked at it. As he sifted through the knuts, galleons and sickles he became more agitated.

"What the- What HELL are you trying pull? I ask for your wallet and you give me your fucking coin collection? This isn't even real money, you poofa!" With that he raised his gun and shot Ron in the chest three times and once in the head. Hermione started screaming and couldn't stop. She had been through war, but watching the light go out of her best friend's eyes undid her. Holding his head in her lap she continued sobbing.

"Shut up, you stupid cow!" The man back handed her while still holding his gun. Her head flew

backwards and she came out of her daze. Grabbing for Ron's wand she pointed it at him. He knocked it out of her hand and pushed her backwards down the stairs. She rolled down the thirty stone stairs, doing her best to protect her stomach, but it was no use. When she finally came to a crunching stop her face was cut and bruised, her left arm was broken and blood was pouring furiously from between her legs. Trying to stand, she screamed in agony at the pain in her belly. She clutched at it and curled herself against the wall as the shocking waves of pain made their way through her lower body. She kept rubbing her belly and chanting, "It's okay, baby. Just hold on. It's okay. Mummy's here." It was half an hour before any help arrived.

Sighing, Hermione paid for her tea and put her coat on against the December chill. Walking out into the street she didn't notice the well dressed man watching her walk away. As Draco watched her walk down the street, he wanted so badly to run to her and hold her. He'd never seen her look so broken in his life. He'd gone to the funeral where they had put the urn with their still-born baby's remains in the coffin with Ron. They were buried in the Weasley family cemetery under Ron and Rosalyn Weasley: Devoted Friend and Father; Beloved Daughter. For weeks Hermione walked around in a daze. She lost weight and wouldn't take care of herself. Then one day, she came to work looking like her old self, without some of the old Hermione sparkle. Since Hermione worked at Gringotts as a curse breaker, Draco found that his business with the ministry often took him to the accounting division of the wizarding bank. It had absolutely nothing to do with the fact that he got to watch her go to lunch every day with Padma Patil and Ernie Macmillan. Deciding he'd had enough of skulking in the shadows like her stalker he quickened his pace and called out after her.

"Hermione!" His foot slipped on a patch of ice and he slid until he knocked into her and smashed her into the storefront of Madame Malkin's. This was just great. Now he not only looked like a stalker, but he looked like a bumbling fool. Neville Longbottom couldn't have done any better. He was brought out of his mortification by the fact that for the first time in two years he was pressed intimately up against her. Not wanting her to feel just how much he was affected by her, he pushed himself off of her and offered her his hand. "I'm so sorry."

"For what? Following me or knocking the wind out of me?" He couldn't believe it, she was actually smiling. It disappeared quickly, but it had been there.

"I haven't been following you," he said indignantly.

"Oh, so the Magical Finance Law division has decided to send the chairman of the board to check on the accounting paper work instead of the interns?"

"I'm very thorough," he said tersely. "I am however sorry for bumping into you. I meant to ask you to lunch tomorrow." He'd found the Malfoy charm again.

Her face fell and she stepped back from him immediately. "I can't, I already have a lunch date."

"What? With who?" he was in shock and more than a little jealous. Had their years together meant nothing to her? If she was ready to move on from Weasley, then as far as he was concerned, he should be her only option. He would have been her only option period if he hadn't been so foolish.

"Zacharias Smith has made an offer for me." She looked down as soon as she said this.

"An offer, what do you mean an offer?" Draco was confused. She didn't move in Pureblood

society where 'offers' of marriage were made to form alliances between families, so what kind of offer could that blonde headed twit from Hufflepuff have for her.

"It's about the new law, Draco. I'm surprised you haven't been in more of an uproar since you'll be affected."

"What? That Marriage Law nonsense? They can't possibly be serious. That will never pass."

"It already did this morning. Ginny has been trying to fight it, but they saw that after the war the wizarding population had a thirty percent drop and in the years since it hasn't climbed back up at all. Everyone between the ages of eighteen and forty is required to find a spouse or the ministry will assign one for us. We then have to produce a child or be fined. Those eligible will be tested for fertility before being forced to pay a fine for not producing children." At the mention of children, Hermione's voice got very small and she stared a piece of rubbish on the street.

"And you're just going to take this? Why aren't you fighting this? How could you even consider sleeping with that ponce, much less marrying him?" Draco was enraged and he wanted to throttle someone.

"I can't find a way out of it! I've spent countless hours in the library trying to find a loophole and there isn't one. If I refuse, they'll snap my wand in half and I won't be allowed back in the Magical world. I may have been born to muggles, but I am a witch and I won't turn my back on a society that I fought so hard to preserve no matter how fucked up its laws are!"

Draco's stormy grey eyes stared back hers and she realized how alive she felt around him. Everyone else tiptoed around her as if she might explode if they disagreed with her or hurt her feelings. It had been ages since she'd had a good argument and she felt relieved. That relief was short lived however when he took two long purposeful steps towards her backing her against the brick wall. He was almost a foot taller than she was and his broad chest was taught with muscles. Even though he had never been violent towards women, his imposing figure and impressive magical abilities made her feel vulnerable.

"Who else has offered for you?" he asked with his teeth clenched.

"Seamus Finnigan, Cormac MacLaggen, and Lee Jordan."

"Is that all?"

"Those are the ones I'm willing to meet with to discuss the situation."

"Owl Smith and tell him you won't be meeting with him."

"Why?"

"Because you've already found a fianc."

"Who? You? Draco, you can't be serious. You didn't want to be with me when you had a choice, why would you want to be with me when you're forced into the situation. Go find yourself some vapid heiress who won't make any demands of you, because that's one thing I'm talking about with Smith tomorrow. I refuse to be in a farce of a marriage. If the Ministry is going to force me into a marriage I'm going to do my best to make it a real, working marriage. I won't tolerate

infidelity and I won't simply turn my head when it happens. I refuse to be in a marriage that's a business arrangement where my children only see their father at meal times and special occasions!"

"I never cheated on you!" he snapped.

"No, but you wanted to and don't think I don't know that sometimes things went a bit too far to be considered harmless. You broke up with me just to ensure that you wouldn't cheat on me. If we had been together for a month longer, I don't think you would be able to make that claim. We were wrong for each other then, we're wrong for each other now."

"We're not wrong for each other! I was a fool and I made a horrible mistake. The only person I want is you and you're a liar if you can say that there's anyone out there who's a better match for you."

"Draco, you only want what you can't have. You're still that same spoiled little boy who wants whatever toy someone else has and then when you get it, you're bored and want something else."

"I was never bored with you. I was stupid and made the biggest mistake of my life. I've felt empty ever since I left you. I wanted to know what else was out there and as soon as I found out, I realized that all I ever wanted was you."

"And what was I supposed to do? Sit around and twiddle my thumbs while waiting on you to come back and say, 'Oh well, you're the best I can do'?" Hermione was livid now and pushed him away from her. She began stalking towards the apparition point, intent on leaving him behind. "Go to hell, Malfoy."

Draco jogged after her and spun her around to face him. "You're right. I am a selfish, spoiled little brat and I get whatever I want. I want you, Hermione, so that means I'm going to get you and I'm going to use every trick and favor I've got to make sure it happens. You can go on your little lunch date with Smith if you want, but it would be pointless because you won't be marrying him or anyone else for that matter. I want you and I'm going to get you." With that Draco let go of her and disappeared.

A/N- Okay, I hope this is paragraph spacing enough. Thanks to everyone who reviews!

Chapter 3: Smith is Out

As she walked up the steps to her flat, Hermione sighed with frustration at her predicament. Her lunch with Zacharias had been predictably dull. He had informed her that he would 'allow' her to keep her job until she became pregnant at which time she would quit and move on to the more important task of taking of him and their children. While she was attending to him, it would be important for her to realize that as provider his needs came first so she would have to stop all of her academic pursuits as well. He would put all of her money into his account and she would have to ask him before making a withdraw. It appeared that he had forgotten exactly who he was talking to because no one in their right mind would tell Hermione Granger that she couldn't continue her work. She was the author of five books, two of which were currently in use at Hogwarts. She had fought Voldemort and been instrumental in the reestablishment of wizarding

society. Zacharias Smith had been left sitting at the restaurant, a stunned expression on his face as she told him that she would rather snap her wand in half than marry him.

Disabling the wards on her apartment and walking in she kicked off her shoes and put the kettle on before slouching down in her chair and putting her feet up on the ottoman. She had exactly six months to find a fiancé and so far the only two prospects she had were Seamus Finnegan and Lee Jordan. She would meet with Cormac just to see if he had changed at all in the years since school. She didn't want to meet with any of them. She wanted to fall in love and have someone love her back, not list off their compatible qualities like potions ingredients.

But you do have someone who loves you. That damn voice in the back of her head wouldn't shut up.

Ever since noticing that Draco Malfoy watched her go to lunch everyday she'd thought about him more than she cared to admit. There had been a time in her life when she thought that she would never get over him. When he told her he was leaving, she had been heartbroken, but she had expected it. He often disappeared at parties and she saw the appreciative glances that were sent his way by his secretary at work. He wasn't the only one who had been unhappy, though. She was getting bored of being the fashionable couple around town. She loved spending time with Draco and enjoyed his friends, but there was always a sense of putting on a show whenever they went out. She wanted something more tangible than high fashion and expensive champagne. She wanted to have children and she wanted a partner that saw those children as a blessing and not as a hindrance or merely a continuation of the family line. Draco wasn't ready to have kids and probably never would be.

Thinking about children brought a lump to her throat. The day she had found out she was pregnant had been the happiest day of her life. It had been unplanned and the circumstances could have been better, but she hadn't thought of that at all. She was going to be a mother and her baby had the most wonderful candidate for a father she could have hoped for. Maybe she and Ron weren't in love, but they had loved one another and they cared deeply for each other. She had been confident that they could make things work and so had he.

Hearing the kettle go off, she got up to pour herself a cup of tea. Suddenly the flames in her fireplace roared to life and Draco spun out onto the floor of her living room. Casting a quick scourgify on himself, he looked around.

"What the hell happened to our flat?" he demanded.

"Why don't you tell me why you're here unannounced, first." Hermione glared at him. At the sound of flames in her fire place she had dropped her cup and pulled out her wand. Now she had to repair her cup and pour out more tea.

"I'm here to see how your lunch with Smith went and to find out why you haven't been answering my owls." He stopped and looked around. "Where's the furniture we bought?"

Rolling her eyes, Hermione sat back down in her chair with her new cup and replied, "I moved out of the old flat because this one suited my needs better. When you moved out you told me to keep the furniture and do whatever I wanted to with it. When I found out about the baby, I decided that art deco and suede leather couches wasn't exactly something to raise a toddler around so I gave it to Colin and Susan Creevey and bought this new stuff."

Draco looked at the warm patterned, overstuffed couch and thought of how comfortable and inviting it looked. It wasn't cheap, but it definitely leaned more towards saying 'Weasley' than 'Malfoy'. He suddenly remembered that she had probably lived in this flat with Ron. Unbidden images of her lithe body wrapped around Weasley's rose in his mind. Stealing his nerves he turned towards her.

"Well, what happened with Smith? I trust you sent him packing."

"Yes, but not for the reason you think." She related the story of Smith's audacity. "The funny thing is, I actually was considering working from home once the kids were born. It isn't as if I can't do research in my living room or have my mum watch the baby while I'm at the office or library."

"Well, I won't stop you from going back to work, but I am pleased with your decision to stay home with the children. It won't be as if we'll need the money, but I couldn't have you going mad with nothing to exercise that brain of yours except nappies and windings."

"Not this again, Draco. I'm not marrying you and I've given you my reasons."

"Because you think I'll be unfaithful?"

"Because of a number of reasons! We don't want the same things."

"Since the day I found out you were pregnant I haven't been with anyone. I haven't even flirted. You're the only thing I want, Hermione and if I can't have you I don't want a substitute."

"Draco, maybe at one point in time your sex life was my business, but it isn't anymore and I think you need to leave." She got up and pointed towards the fireplace.

He was on her in two steps and had her pressed up against the wall, his blonde hair falling into his eyes giving him a mad look. "I'm not leaving and you aren't marrying anyone unless it's me, do you understand?" He pushed her hands up against the wall over her head and pressed himself against her body. "You love me and you belong to me and I'm going to make certain that everyone knows it." With that he pressed his lips against her before biting on her lower lip, making her gasp so that he had full access to her mouth. He pressed his hips against hers and was rewarded with another gasp of pleasure.

Taking that as his cue he wrenched her away from the wall and carried her squirming body back towards the bedroom, throwing her on the bed.

A/N- Thanks so much to everyone who reviews! You guys are awesome and keep me going! Cheers!

Chapter 4: It's Not That Easy

As soon as Draco dropped her on the bed he took off his outer robes and laid himself on top of her, once again capturing her hands and pinning them above her head. With his free hand he unbuttoned the front of her blouse, finally growing impatient and ripping it apart.

"You bastard!" she hissed. "That was expensive!"

"I'll buy you three more," he said huskily as his eyes took in the sight of her lovely skin complimented by the lace of her bra. Straddling her he shrugged out of his clothes and then in one movement he had her skirt off of her hips, leaving her in only a pair of pale blue lace knickers. He leaned forward and kissed her again, shoving her legs on either side of his knees. It had been ages since he'd been with a woman and even longer since he'd been with this one. The anticipation was killing him.

Hermione twisted under him, but he knew she was turned on. She'd never been one for passive love-making. Like most things in her life, she was passionate about this act as well and Draco knew he brought the best in her. Latching his mouth onto the side of her neck he had her bra off with an expert twist of his fingers in the back. He lathed his tongue around the dusky pink tip before biting down hard. Hearing her moan in ecstasy made him almost come. Her hands found their way into his hair and she pulled at it making him face her. They locked eyes for a moment before Draco pushed her back on the bed holding her down with one hand and teasing her wet opening with his other.

"Tell me you don't want me and I'll stop." She managed to moan and glare at him at the same time. He thrust one long finger into her cunt and closed his eyes at how tight she was. Thrusting a second finger in and drawing them in and out with practiced ease, he watched her throw her head back. "Tell me this doesn't feel right and I'll leave, you'll never see me again, but you and I both know this is what you want."

For one horrible moment he thought that she might say no. He thought that maybe she had found a better lover or that he was no longer capable of driving her mad. Still thrusting his fingers he felt her inner muscles tighten and to his relief, she ground out, "Don't stop, please don't stop."

Grinning he removed his fingers and with one hard thrust he was sheathed inside of her. She screamed at the combination of pleasure and pain. It seemed she had been without a lover for quite some time as well and Draco was glad for it. He began thrusting into her body and placed his mouth over hers, plunging his tongue inside so that he could fully invade her body in both openings. He wanted to crawl inside her and mark her as his. He bit at various points on her neck and breasts, leaving bruises and nipping the skin in some places. He wanted her to not be able to forget that this had happened tomorrow.

Sitting up, he grabbed her hips with his large hands and held on as she met him thrust for thrust. He stared at her eyes and felt a surge of possessive euphoria pass through him. This was how it was supposed to be. Just him and her and nobody else. It would never be this good with anyone else because she had been made just for him.

Feeling her muscles clamp around him he doubled his efforts, slamming into her, watching her breasts bounce with the movement and the color rise from her chest up through her face until she at last screamed out her climax. He followed hers, calling out her name before falling on top of her in a sweaty tangle of limbs.

As he finally rolled over, pulling out of her he noticed that her bed sheets were blue satin and grinned. She'd gotten a taste for satin sheets living with him. She may have gotten rid of their furniture, but she couldn't completely eradicate him from her life. His influence was still there.

Hermione got up and composed herself before reaching out for her robe which hung on the back of her door. Draco got up and dressed himself and then moved behind her, wrapping his arms around her waist. She kept her face turned away from him.

"Well, I guess that's settled then. I'll owl the Ministry and tell them. You'll want to notify your land lord that you'll be moving soon and I'll inform the elves to make room in storage for your things until we figure out what to do with them. How soon do you want to get married?"

"We're not getting married," she said softly.

"What?" he yelled. "After what just happened? We just-"

"Slept together," she finished for him. "It doesn't change anything."

"It changes everything! As far as I'm concerned, you're mine now!"

"It doesn't change anything, Draco; we're still too different to make this work!"

"We're not too different! We challenge each other! You know you don't want some ponce you can run over with that insufferable stubborn nature of yours, you'd be bored to tears! You thrive on intellectual debate and I can give that to you!"

"Yes, you can give me that, but that's about it!" she shouted back.

"How about the best bloody orgasm you've ever had in your life?"

She blushed and pulled her robe closer to her. "That's right," he continued. "I'm the one that makes you feel alive, that's why you always came back to me because we're fucking good together and you love it. You love that I don't treat you like the Gryffindor Princess everyone else sees. I spent two years never once getting tired of fucking you because we're it for each other."

"You got tired enough to move out, which brings me back to my point! We both got tired of that life! I was sick and tired of going to every single party and social gathering listening to people talk about the difference between French dress robes and Italian ones! Towards the end I rarely saw you and there were days I was glad for it! I was spending my time with a bunch of shallow, pompous idiots and it made me sick because you wanted to be one of them!"

"I was raised in that world, but it's not who I am! I figured that out two months after I moved out!" He was shocked. The entire time he thought that she had been content and it never occurred to him that she was bored of him as well.

"If you figured that out, then how come it took so long for you to admit it?"

"Because I wanted to be sure!" he screamed. "I didn't want to run back to you just because I got scared! I didn't want you to just be some kind of security or crutch! I wanted to know that what we had was real, I didn't want to question it!"

"But you did, Draco," she said quietly. "And that isn't love."

"Maybe I didn't treat you the way that you deserved, but I always loved you!"

"Love isn't walking out on somebody just because things get tough! Love is sticking together and making it work, no matter what! Love is making time in your life for the people you care about! Love isn't putting someone on the shelf so that you can go do whatever you want and then come back and flip out because they didn't wait for you the way you think they should have!" Her face was alive with anger and Draco had never seen her more beautiful.

"I'm sorry, for what I did, more sorry than you'll ever know. I've changed, though. And I didn't flip out on you!"

"So what do you call your little disappearing act in Hogsmeade? Blaise Zabini practically accused me of assaulting you! You went home and threw a hissy fit like the little rich brat you've always been!"

"It wasn't a fit, I was heartbroken! I admit I was an arrogant asshole thinking I'd have you at my beck and call for the rest of my life and seeing you that day ended that whole era of my life! I knew right then that I should never have taken you for granted and I'll never do that ever again. You used to be the one who gave everyone second chances, so where's the second chance for the man you love?"

"It isn't about second chances, Draco, it's about not making the same mistakes over again. I want a family with children. I want my child's father to know what his son's favourite colour is and what he does all day. I want someone who comes home after work and doesn't stay out drinking with his friends! You've never wanted that life and I'm not expecting you to be the one to give it to me."

"All I want Hermione, is to come home to you, every night and that's what I'm going to get because you let one important thing slip by."

"And what's that?" she asked, agitated.

"You still love me."

"I never said that."

"No, but you won't deny it. You still love me and you were put in Gryffindor because when push comes to shove you follow your heart. This is far from over." With that he shoved past her and flooded back to his home, leaving a shaken Hermione alone with her thoughts.

Chapter 5: In Her Condition

Thank you to all my reviewers! You guys are incredibly awesome!

Hermione staggered back from the dusty book room in the curse breaking department of Gringotts with several very old tomes about ancient security curses. The Vigilo family had brought various items in that had been found in their family's attic that most definitely contained gold, but were heavily guarded. Hermione was currently working on an ornate box that caused severe burning of the skin whenever someone tried to open it. It had belonged to the very brilliant, but paranoid Stella Vigilo who had been highly mistrustful of her brother and his

children. Who knew what was actually in the box, but Hermione was determined to find out.

As she tried various charms on the antique box a horrid smell entered her nose and she immediately ran to the nearest waste bin to empty her stomach of the contents of her breakfast. When she came back up she saw Ernie Macmillan eating a liver and onion sandwich. How on earth Padma could stand kissing him when his breath smelled like that, she had no idea. Then again, her stomach had been very touchy lately. Her last meeting with Draco had shaken her up pretty badly. The fact that he bombarded her home and workplace with owls didn't help matters.

Draco Malfoy had worked his way back into the good graces of the Ministry. Although his family had been disgraced at the close of the war, Harry's avouchment to his character had saved him from Azkaban. His family had been disgraced, but their fortunes had grown and in politics, money could always cover a multitude of sins. Although he wasn't his father, Draco Malfoy and his money commanded a lot of attention within the Ministry. So much that Hermione received regular correspondence from the Minister of Magic himself. Everyday he reminded her of her duty if she wanted to remain in the wizarding world. He also said that as the most prominent muggle born in Britain, she should definitely consider marrying into a pureblood family to improve relations and dispel bigoted notions. Hermione had owed the minister back stating that she hadn't found many pureblooded suitors and unsurprisingly the Minister had recommended the Malfoy heir as a perfectly logical and natural choice to be a mate for 'a witch of her caliber'. He brought up their past relationship which had been chronicled in the gossip section of the Daily Prophet and even offered to perform the ceremony himself. Hermione took comfort in the fact that until her five months were up, the Minister of Magic couldn't flat out order her to marry Draco Malfoy. It was looking as if it might come to that, however.

Cormac MacLaggen had owed Hermione the day after Draco had left her flat, apologizing for leading her on, but he decided to put all his efforts into wooing Luna Lovegood. Hermione had been confused, but relieved. Cormac meant well, but Hermione didn't think she could live with him any better than she could Zacharias Smith. Seamus Finnegan, however, she had been quite certain she could live with. He was surprisingly philosophical and she had been on a few dates with him after Hogwarts before she and Draco had gotten together. He had a quick smile, treated her with great respect and most importantly, could hold his own in intellectual debate. However, every time she made an appointment to meet with him to discuss what they both wanted out of marriage, he had some crisis at work that needed his immediate attention. He was a veterinarian for magical creatures and one day Hermione had just gone down to his office to see him in person. When she got there she amazed at how many animals could fit in one space. Owls fluttered all about the room, kneazles meowed and hissed from under the office chairs and there was a baby hippogriff in a pen in the corner. Apparently the ministry had been sending each and every one of its owls to Seamus for check ups. Seamus said he couldn't complain about the money, it was just difficult to do anything else with so many patients. Hermione went to the back of his office where he showed her the team of Abraxan horses the ministry had ordered him to breed. He'd had a free hour coming up for lunch the next day and they agreed to meet.

When Seamus had shown up, his face was barely recognizable from the bruising. He limped when he walked and winced as he sat down. He told Hermione that after careful consideration he had decided that, although she was a lovely girl, they would not be suited for marriage. He then glanced to the corner of the restaurant and left, telling her a hasty goodbye. Hermione hadn't been certain, but she thought she saw a familiar blonde head sitting in the back corner and after Seamus left, she was certain of who it was.

Coming back to the present, Hermione turned to Ernie and politely asked if he could eat his sandwich elsewhere.

"Oh, of course. Sorry 'bout that." He wrapped it back up in the paper and came over to where she was seated. "What are you working on?"

"One of the items from the Vigilo family. If Stella Vigilo wasn't such a pain in my arse I'd like her very much. I think her ingenuity could only be surpassed by Rowena herself."

"The Vigilo family? Are you quite sure you should be working on those?"

"Yes, why shouldn't I?" Hermione was confused, but in her exhausted state her brain wasn't working nearly as quickly as Ernie's.

"I just figured that someone in your condition shouldn't be working with such explosive or poisonous curses. I know if Padma ever worked on one of those while pregnant I'd tie her to our couch for a week." Ernie continued speaking, but Hermione wasn't listening. Her tiredness, nausea and moodiness, all symptoms of stress were also glaring symptoms of something else entirely. Thinking back she realized she hadn't had her monthlies and she was so regular she could set her watch by it. Standing up and feeling slightly dizzy at the realization of what was happening she left the office and started out the door of the bank, Ernie and Padma calling out after her. Once she got to the door, however, the exact two people she didn't want to see were standing there.

Draco Malfoy was having a pleasant conversation with the Minister of Magic. When he looked up and saw Hermione he greeted her and then walked right up to her, gave her a quick peck on the lips and continued talking to the Minister, his arm around her waist, as if nothing out of the ordinary was going on. Hermione's breathing quickened and as she looked from the Minister's laughing face to Draco's smiling one, she took two calming breaths and promptly fainted.

Chapter 6: Finally Mine

Opening her eyes, Hermione immediately surmised that she was in St. Mungo's. The bright white walls and bustle of activity were unmistakable. Also unmistakable was the white blonde head of the man who was seated in a chair next to her bed. Looking at him, the sense of panic she had felt before her fainting spell came back to her. What if she was pregnant? The only possible father was Draco Malfoy and if he found out then he would force her to marry him, laws be damned. 'Would that be so bad?' the little voice in the back of her head asked. Hermione mentally blew the voice a raspberry and sat quietly, lost in her thoughts. When the break up had occurred, she had been very upset, but she told herself that it was for the best. She couldn't help thinking that it was one of the worst possible things that could have happened to her. She had loved Draco fiercely and even though they were quite different she was willing to look past those differences because being with him made her feel alive and whole. With Ron, her intellect had detracted from her appeal, but with Draco it made her more desirable. All of the feelings she had for him, however couldn't mask the fact that they wanted very different things out of life. When they had broken up, she put all of her feelings into a mental box and tucked it away in the back of her mind. She was nowhere near ready to open that box and reexamine the contents. However, if she was pregnant again, she would have to.

Thinking back to the immediate issue at hand, Hermione frowned. She didn't know how to react.

On one hand, she didn't want to get her hopes up. Loosing Rosalyn had been devastating for her. She had wanted to be a mother since she understood the concept of becoming one and her baby brought her a sense of wholeness and well-being that she hadn't experienced since she had lived with Draco. For five months she had been happier than she had ever been in her entire life. She didn't know if she could take being that happy again only to have it cruelly pulled away from her. On the other hand, Hermione wanted this baby so badly her teeth hurt. She was more than ready for motherhood and even though her logical side told her that she didn't know for certain, her dreamy, passionate side was already mapping out a nursery in her flat.

While Hermione sat there musing, Draco woke up and stretched. Looking over and realizing she was awake, he immediately bent towards her running his hands over her forehead. "You're awake," he stated. "You gave us all quite a fright. The mediwitch said for me to call her in as soon as you're awake." Hermione gave him a weak smile and he kissed her forehead before getting up to call the healer. 'Here goes nothing,' she thought.

Draco and the healer entered the room and Draco sat down next to Hermione on the bed, pulling her close to him and leaving his arm around her shoulders. The healer, an elderly woman with dark skin and salt and pepper hair looked at them over her red rimmed glasses before asking Hermione a series of questions. "So, Miss Granger, other than fainting what are your symptoms?"

"Well, I've been nauseous and very tired as of late. I can't seem to get enough sleep and even though I can't seem to get enough to eat, I never seem to be able to keep anything down, especially in the mornings."

"I see. How long has this been going on, Miss Granger?"

"About a week and a half."

"A week and a half! Why didn't you tell me you were sick?" Draco demanded.

"Because I thought you were part of the problem!" Hermione snapped back at him. She turned back to the healer. "I've been under a lot of stress lately and I've always gotten little to no sleep when I'm worried, so I just thought this would all go away and then I collapsed at work."

The healer looked at Hermione over her glasses and Draco was strongly reminded of Professor McGonagall's disapproving gaze. "Your health is nothing to take lightly, Miss Granger. Now, I need to do a series of tests and then if all is well, I'll send you on your way." The healer took out what looked like a cross between a telescope and laser pointer and after moving Hermione's clothes aside, pointed it to her belly and a very bright orange light shown down on her pale skin. The healer prodded her belly in a few places before putting the device back in her pocket. She then asked Hermione to remove her knickers and pulled stirrups up from the end of her bed for her feet and gave Hermione a pelvic exam. Afterwards, she took some blood and then asked Hermione to drink a foul smelling potion. The three people in the room waited for a few moments and then Hermione's stomach began glowing bright blue.

"Congratulations, Miss Granger. In about eight months you will be the proud mother of a bouncing baby boy. I'll make an appointment for you to return in a few days so that we can start you on your pre-natal regimen. Until then, I must insist that you take a few days off from work." With that, she left the room leaving a stunned Hermione staring at her still glowing stomach.

Draco had heard what the healer had said, but was certain that he would soon wake up from this wonderful dream. Hermione turned her head slowly in his direction and he looked at her with triumph in his gaze. She was his now. Everything he wanted was coming true for him and all it took was one shag. He was feeling extremely virile and proud of himself until he noticed that Hermione was quickly putting her clothes back in order and trying to escape from the room. "Where do you think you're going?" he thundered after her.

"I'm going home. You heard what the healer said. Thank you for bringing me here and staying to find out what was wrong. Goodbye." Hermione turned to walk away, but Draco picked her up in his strong arms. "What are you doing?" she screeched. "This is degrading, put me down this instant!"

Draco strode through the hallways of St. Mungo's with Hermione in his arms until he got to the check out point. "Put Miss Granger's bill on the Malfoy account and please send her appointment notice to the Manor as that is where she will now be living. Thank you and good day." He walked over to the network of fireplaces and flooed the two of them into the front parlour at Malfoy Manor.

"What in the name of Merlin do you think you're doing?" Hermione screeched. "I am not living here, I am not letting you pay my medical bills and I am not letting you further act as if we've got some sort of relationship! Have you gone daft? Put me down!"

"To answer your question, no I have not gone daft. I'm acting as if we have a relationship, because we do. You will be living here because it is unseemly for newly weds to live in different residences. I will pay for your medical bills because that's what husbands and fathers do. I understand that you are perfectly capable of paying it on your own, however since we will be getting married in roughly a week, that duty falls to me."

"Getting mar- What are you talking about?" Hermione sputtered. "I still have to meet with Lee Jordan and if you think I'm going to marry you just because I'm pregnant, you are mad. Besides, you don't even know if this baby is yours."

"Don't you even consider passing my child off as another man's!" Draco dropped her on the lounge and gripped her shoulders, his face only a hair away from her own. "I took care of Finnegan and if need be I'll take care of Jordan as well. Besides," he smirked, "we both know I'm the only possible candidate for a father."

"You assaulted Seamus?"

"No, I merely suggested to the right people at the ministry that all our owls needed a proper check-up and that he was the man for the job. I suggested also that Abraxan horses could be very useful and that Finnegan brat was the best candidate for the breeding. It isn't my fault he can't control them."

"You made them attack him, didn't you?"

"I might've been there when it happened, but it was my third warning to stay away from you. MacLaggen listened much better. That brings me back to my next question: Are you going to try to pass off my child as Jordan's? That would be quite difficult considering the differences in our appearances and Malfoy genes have always won out."

"I would never keep your child from you," Hermione replied. "I just won't marry you because I got pregnant. That's a stupid reason to get married."

"And this law is a better one? Hermione, I wish I had time to do this right and convince you in a proper way. As it is, I don't. I have very little time and a very stubborn witch whom I've both wronged and gotten pregnant and don't think I'm not above getting the Minister to order you to marry me. Let it be your decision and I promise I'll spend the rest of our lives trying to make you and our little boy happy."

Hermione looked at her feet and started crying. She wanted to believe that this was her happy ending, but experience had taught her that it couldn't be. She wanted to trust Draco, but she couldn't. Marrying him would make her vulnerable to him again. On the other hand, what choice did she have? Draco was right, it was better to go when she had a choice than to be publicly ordered to by the Minister. Wiping her eyes with the back of her hands, she looked up at Draco and said, "Okay, I'll call Lee and tell him it's off. I'll call my mum and tell her I'm getting married next Saturday."

Draco leaned forward and gathered her up in his arms. She weighed next to nothing and it seemed impossible to him that a tiny life was already growing inside of her. But it was, and that tiny life would be the irrevocable connection between the two of them. He didn't say anything as he carried her up the stairs to his bedroom and laid her down on the bed. He climbed in next to her and molded their bodies together and reveled at how wonderful it all felt. In five days she would be Hermione Malfoy and living with him full time. Already he could feel the tightness in his chest releasing as he settled next to her already sleeping form. He drifted off next to her, thinking how wonderful life could truly be.

Chapter 7: Wedding Day

Thank you to everyone who reviews, especially to Donovan, who gave me the sweetest compliment a writer could ever hope to hear. I hope you guys enjoy! Cheers!

GC

Draco Malfoy was ecstatic. In half an hour he was going to marry Hermione Granger. Draco Malfoy was also sick to his stomach. What if she didn't show up? What if she did? What if he made her absolutely miserable to the point that she was a shell of her former self and his child grew to hate him because of it? What if she was still in love with Ron Weasley? Draco knew it was ridiculous, but he was jealous of a memory. Ron Weasley, although not perfect, had wanted the same things out of life that she had and had been far better equipped than Draco to give those things to her. Ron was a natural with children and had grown up with the concept that time with your family came before time spent on your business. Hermione's assessment of the family values Draco had been given was accurate. He saw his father at dinner and on special occasions, unless he was being punished. His mother had given him everything he asked for, except time and attention. He knew that she had loved him, she just didn't know how to show it. Draco was determined to be more than his father, both for Hermione and for their baby.

He felt a tug at his elbow and turned to see Blaise Zabini motioning him to come out to the garden as it was time for the ceremony to begin. He walked to the edge of the garden where a flowering archway had been set up in front of several rows of chairs. Hermione had wanted a

small wedding, so there were very few guests. The Weasleys and Harry and Ginny Potter sat in the front row beside Hermione's mother. Ernie and Padma sat behind them. On his side, his mother sat next to his Aunt Andromeda and Blaise Zabini sat with his date, Luna Lovegood. Behind them sat Marcus and Pansy Flint. Draco thought he would have liked something with a little more flair, but found that this setting was actually quite perfect.

Just then, the minister asked all the guests to rise and Draco looked to the back and what he saw made his breath catch and his heart freeze. Hermione had spent the past week at his house, so he should have been used to seeing her but he wasn't used to seeing her like this. She had on a beautiful gauzy, empire waisted wedding gown and she had her long curly hair swept up in a French twist. She was wearing her grandmother's pearls and tiny pearl earrings. Her eyebrows had been shaped and she had on very little make-up, but Draco couldn't recall ever seeing a pretty woman, even at fashion shows. The fact that her gorgeous body housed the sharpest brain and biggest heart he'd ever run across made her all the more unreal to him. This woman was carrying his child and was going to marry him. He'd been raised to believe that Malfoy's always got the best, but until now he hadn't truly believed it. The moment was slightly soured when he reminded himself that she wouldn't be here if he hadn't used threats, but he shoved those thoughts aside to focus on the moment.

The ceremony went by very well and when he slipped the ring on her finger, he felt the magical tug in his body that bound them together. He looked in her eyes and she said her vows, vows that would tie their fates together for the rest of their lives and searched for any hint of misgivings. He found none. Like the true Gryffindor she was, once her course was set, she would follow through to the bitter end. He hoped he was worthy of this devotion.

Once the ceremony was over and the guests had cleared, he watched his new wife walk around the garden making sure no one had left anything and tried to find if he felt at all guilty about what he had done. He thought he should, but he couldn't. Maybe it was vain of him to think himself the only man alive who was capable of giving her happiness, but he felt it in his gut that he was right. Maybe he didn't deserve her, but he loved her and that had to count for something, didn't it? Getting up, he walked over to where she was standing, watching the sunset.

"I can assure you that there are far more interesting sights in the bedroom, Mrs. Malfoy." He murmured the statement into her ear while slowly running his hands over the flat plane of her belly.

"Since when were you confined to the bedroom, Draco?" she asked with a smirk worthy of any of his ancestors. At least he knew he could still please her sexually.

Hermione turned into him and kissed her way up his neck and then onto his face. Everytime he tried to capture her lips, she moved away and planted a kiss elsewhere. Her slender hands deftly removed his tie and jacket and unbuttoned his dress shirt. He unzipped her dress in the back and let it pool to her feet and helped her step out of it. She was left in only a slip and white lace knickers. Coming back to him she traced the contours of his chest with her finger tips and he closed his eyes as she removed his shirt. He waited for her hands to continue the exploration of his body, but they didn't. He opened his eyes and looked at her quizzically.

"You got what you wanted, I'm married to you. If you want to enjoy what's yours, you'll have to work for it." With that Hermione took off at a run and Draco was hot on her heels. She dashed into the hedge maze and he could hear her voice laughing at him.

"Laugh now, wench. We'll see how much you're laughing when I'm inside of you," he growled.

"That's assuming you can catch me." He could tell she was on the other side of the hedge and so he closed his eyes and with a pop he was standing right next to her. She shrieked and tried to run, but he pulled her to him and then pulled her down on the ground.

"That's cheating," she ground out from under him as he ripped her knickers off.

"No, it isn't. You never said I couldn't apparate to catch you." She was still squirming beneath him as he lifted her slip up around her hips. Licking his fingers he played with her clit and found that she was already wet. Abandoning that he pulled his trousers down to his knees and plunged into her. "Fuck, Hermione! You are so fucking warm and tight."

She jerked her hips upwards trying to throw him off of her. "Let's see if you can stay on, love," she panted. He rammed into her again with force and she gasped at the pleasure and pain she felt. Bringing her knees up next to his hips she bucked against him. Draco ripped the straps of her slip and pulled the silky material down till he could see her breasts in the moonlight. Squeezing them in his palms he tested their weight before catching one perfect globe in his mouth, sucking on it as he pistoned into her. Suddenly, he pulled her up and made her turn around. Forcing her onto her knees he separated her legs and plunged into her from behind. Pulling out his wand, he made it impossible for her to move her arms. He grabbed a hold of her hips and kept pumping into her.

"You are mine," he grunted. "You belong to me. Say it." When she didn't reply he slapped her on the ass leaving a red mark.

"I'm yours," she hissed.

"Say all of it," he gritted out from his teeth.

"I'm yours, I belong to you," she cried. He fingered her clit with his free hand and hissed when she ground her hips closer to his, trying to increase the amount of contact she was getting.

"What's your name?" he whispered hotly next to her ear.

"Hermione," She responded, confused.

"What is your name? All of it?"

"My name is Hermione Malfoy." Draco almost came right then, but held on.

"Who do you belong to, Hermione Malfoy?" he asked. He had slowed down his thrusts to long, teasing strokes and he could tell she was about to come.

"I belong to Draco Malfoy," she whimpered Hearing that he hammered into her in earnest until he felt her walls clamp down on him, milking his cock for all it was worth. He exploded into her body and the spell that held her arms was released and the two of them collapsed on the ground.

Draco waited for his breathing to return to normal before gathering her up in his arms and

walking back to the Manor. He would let her rest for a few minutes before he took her again. Grinning to himself, he decided that married life suited him quite well.

Chapter 8: Starting from Scratch

Walking through Diagon Alley, Draco felt better than he had in days. Shopping as a cure for depression had been something he'd inherited from his mother. Holding his wife's hand he steered through the crowds until he found himself outside of Matilda's Nursery, the premier baby store for wizards. Pulling in a blank faced Hermione, he looked around the store, excited to pick out the items his son would be using in five months. His relationship with Hermione had been strained the past few months. Their nights together were wonderful, but during the evening she was always cool but polite towards him. He took her to lunch everyday and Padma Patil-McMillan always gave him that grin that people give newly weds. Hermione would debate with him and she wouldn't pull away when he was publicly affectionate with her, but she never leaned her head on his shoulder while they watched the telly or leaned towards him while they read on the couch. The only time he saw any glimpse of what their old relationship had been like was when they talked about their baby. He'd gone with her to all of her appointments and even went to these muggle classes her mother had signed her up for called 'Lamaze'. The instructor reminded him of Professor Trelawney, but the exercises did seem helpful and for two hours a week he got to be in the company of other prospective fathers. His and Hermione's child was obviously going to be far superior to any of the other babies in the class, he could tell. However, he had collected a few business cards with promises of play dates.

Hermione immediately perked up upon entering the store. He walked her towards the back where different sets of nursery furniture were arranged. There were varying styles and designs made out of different kinds of materials. Draco already had a family bassinette that would be placed in their bedroom until the future Malfoy could sleep halfway through the night. He wanted something that was well-crafted, had value, but would be ageless. He'd loathed being an only child and hopefully after their first bundle of joy arrived, more would follow. That is if he could get his marriage straightened out. He'd thought that once he had her in his house that things would naturally fall back into their old habits. He missed the little things, like how she would absentmindedly rub his back when they walked through a store or run her fingers through his hair while he worked at home. Sometimes at night she roll over in her sleep and throw her arm over him, the way she had when they lived in their flat, but it wasn't a nightly occurrence. At night he was plagued with dreams in which she left him for Seamus Finnegan or Lee Jordan or where she angrily told him he would never be the love of her life the way Ron Weasley had been. Ron was still a sore subject between them that had never been discussed. Had he ruined their relationship permanently when he'd left? Would she have ever gone back to him even if she hadn't gotten pregnant with Ron's child? Had she been happier with Ron than she was with him? Draco had grown up over the years and what if Ron had too? What if he matured into the perfect man for Hermione like everyone always thought he would be? It was killing Draco inside, but he didn't think he would like the answers to his questions. Whenever he felt insecure, he asserted himself sexually, which meant that their nights had been rather athletic as of late.

Forcing himself to think of furniture for his unborn child, Draco put the thoughts of screwing his wife's over active brains out from his mind. Hermione had gotten into the shopping spirit and was walking from one crib to another, examining them and looking at the prices. She was already showing and Draco took every opportunity he could to touch her belly and know that he was responsible for its roundness. Walking up behind her he pressed a kiss to her ear and ran his hands over her belly.

"See anything?" he asked and felt happiness wash over him as she leaned back into him and smiled.

"I don't know. I really like the dark cherry one that has the ivory inlay, but it's rather dark for a nursery, don't you think?"

"I think that whatever his mummy picks out, our little man is going to love. Besides, he won't know that there was a different choice to be had until he's too old for it to matter."

He was rewarded with another smile and as she walked to the next display, she held his hand. He was glad, because the next person who walked in the door made him grit his teeth in anger. Julian Delacour had visited his cousin Fleur in Britain and decided that he enjoyed the scenery very much. Part of that scenery had been the inside of Hermione's room during University. It had been during one of their 'off' periods and they hadn't been committed to each other, but it had still made Draco seethe with anger. Hermione had informed him later that they hadn't actually slept together, rather just had a few heated snogging sessions, but Draco knew that Julian had wanted much more from his wife.

"Julian, how are you?" Hermione asked and Draco noticed that she was nervous. Draco almost had apoplexy as he watched the very handsome French man kiss his wife on both cheeks and then put both his slimy French hands on her baby bump.

"Hermione, eet 'as been too long, ma cherie. I see I 'ave been beaten en ze race to win your 'eart. Pregnancy suits you mon amour." Hermione blushed and Draco seethed. Perhaps he squeezed her hand too hard because she immediately came out of her stupor and introduced him.

"Actually, Julian, this is my husband, Draco Malfoy. We're expecting our first child in September." The two blonde men regarded each other. Each was very handsome, but Julian was heartbreakingly beautiful in that fairy prince kind of way. Draco knew that Julian's grandmother had been a Veela, but Julian had apparently not found his mate yet. Draco hoped he sensed her soon, because dealing with his obsession over Hermione was discomforting. Hermione had once confessed drunkenly to Pansy that Julian could do things with his tongue most guys could only dream about and he didn't want her having second thoughts about her position on fidelity. Although their marriage bonding had included a strong fidelity charm, he didn't want his wife imagining this prat's tongue when his head was between her legs.

Draco was startled to see the bastard coolly appraising him. 'So you won ze 'eart of ze elusive Hermione Granger, zen? I congratulate you, monsieur. You are indeed a very lucky man. Any man would be more zan 'appy to 'ave zis woman carrying 'is child. Isn't she beautiful? Most men do not find pregnant women attractive, but I find zem to be gorgeous."

"Hermione has never been more beautiful to me than when she is pregnant. I assure you, the sight of her pregnant with MY child has only increased her attractiveness to me." Draco then put a possessive arm around Hermione's waist. Julian apparently found this highly amusing because his eyes danced.

"Well, Hermione, I will leave you to your shopping. I do hope I will see you at ze Weasley dinner next Saturday. Fleur ees also expecting again and I must be off to find ze new leetle one a gift. Adieu." He then gave Hermione a very long, involved kiss on her hand. If Hermione's face had

been red before, it was now as scarlet as the Gryffindor common room walls. As soon as the blonde monstrosity left, Draco turned on her.

"Do you fancy him?" he asked, his jaw tense.

"Draco, don't be stupid," Hermione said.

"Just answer the question. Do you fancy him?" He needed to know for some reason.

"No, there are you happy?" she asked.

"Are you sure? Are you quite certain that his oral skills aren't worthy of your remembrance? He seemed quite keen to show you again, in case you had forgotten. Sure you don't want to chase after him and have him give me pointers?" Draco knew he was about to make a scene and that he sounded like a fishwife, but he didn't care. Hermione pulled him into a corner where they were surrounded by stuffed animals in varying colors.

"I don't know what your problem is, but fix it! Yes, Julian and I have a past, but he has nothing to do with us. If you must know, I'm much happier with you as a lover. Julian was fun, but I couldn't completely enjoy him because he was so damn possessive and needed so much attention. He was high maintenance and not worth it."

"I'm high maintenance and you once told me that my possessiveness was one of your guilty pleasures."

"Yes, but you were worth it. Now let's find a crib for our baby." Draco was comforted by her words, but still uneasy. Things weren't completely right between them, but he enjoyed the knowledge that she had picked him over a half veela, one of the most attractive creatures in the world.

"They wandered the shop for a few more moments before Draco stopped in front of a display. It was a cherry crib set that had a baby Dragon hatching out of its egg carved into the headboard. It came with a matching changing table and wardrobe that each depicted scenes from the new dragon's life. In one, it frolicked with a baby unicorn and in another it was attempting to fly. Hermione stopped when she saw it as well.

"It's perfect," she breathed. Draco found a salesman and had the items immediately shipped to their home. They looked for a few more moments before Hermione decided on blue sheets with stars on them. She bought matching curtains and pillows. Then, she found a small bookcase that was the same cherry as the crib set and Draco had that sent to their home as well. It seemed their day had brightened. Draco walked next to Hermione as she picked out babygrows and held them up for his approval. He had never enjoyed shopping so much. They finished shopping in Matilda's and decided that they needed lunch.

While they ate lunch at an Italian restaurant, multiple people they knew walked past and Draco was proud to show off his new wife and the baby he had put in her belly. When they finished lunch, Draco was very happy. Not only had they just completed their first shopping trip as a married couple, word was now out that Hermione was pregnant. Even better was the fact that she was genuinely overjoyed about it. Draco knew that her first baby would always hold a place in her heart. However, having her this happy over something they had created together made him incredibly smug. Every time she told someone else, her face got a little happier. When it

was time to go home, she actually leaned into him as they flooded back into the manor.

"Today was lovely," she whispered into his ear. He led her upstairs and into their bedroom. Removing his shirt and shoes he watched her look at him with lust in her eyes. His chest had always been one of her favorite parts of him. He watched her take off her dress and stared at her. She hadn't worn a bra that day so she stood in front of him in just her black knickers. She truly was beautiful. The curve of her belly made her look more feminine and it perfectly accentuated her silhouette. Knowing that she had life in her body and that he'd put it there made his cock twitch to life and he freed it from the confines of his trousers, leaving him completely naked to her gaze. She crossed the room to him and got on her knees in front of him. Grasping his aching cock in her hand she pumped up and down his length gently before taking the head into her mouth. She teased him with her tongue for a few moments before taking the first five inches into her mouth. She sucked at him and used her hand to take care of what she could not fit into her mouth. Draco was hard as a rock, but he pulled away from her and lifted her onto their bed. Gently, he pulled her knickers down her smooth legs and he took a few moments to kiss her calves before nudging her thighs apart and paying strict attention to them.

He bit the inside of her thigh and she hissed in pleasure. Running his hands up and down her creamy legs he finally reached her center and used his thumbs to spread her folds apart so that she was held open to his gaze. She pink and glistening from her wetness and arousal and he reached his tongue out to lap at her center. Pulling her labia into his mouth he sucked it a few moments before letting go and licking her opening lick it was his favorite ice cream. She tasted tangy and sweet and he couldn't get enough of her. Pressing his face into her he sucked her clit into his mouth and heard her moan her approval. He tentatively stuck one finger into her cervix and felt for her G-spot. Once he located the rough spot inside her he played it in earnest whilst sucking and licking her clit. She thrashed on the bed and when she came she flooded his mouth with her juices, which he lapped up greedily.

Hermione reached down and pulled him up to her mouth for a kiss and he took that opportunity to bury his cock in her. Moaning into his mouth, Hermione wrapped her legs around his waist to draw him in deeper. "You are so bloody good at that," she rasped as he pumped himself into her.

'Am I better at it than that Delacour bastard?' he asked.

"Oh, yes. You're much better." She purred as she moved her hips in a maddening way that almost made Draco come right then.

"Do you want to know why I'm so much better?" he asked and when she nodded he replied, "Because I know you better. You were meant for me and I know exactly what to do to make you come." He picked up one of her legs, threw it over his shoulder and angled his thrusts so that he hit her in exactly the right spot. Watching her fall apart in his arms had to be the most satisfying thing he'd ever done in his life. As he felt her muscles shudder around his cock he let himself come inside her. They lay there, naked, sweaty, panting and drifting off to sleep. When he was certain her even breathing signaled her entrance into slumber he pulled her to his chest and wrapped a protective hand around her stomach. Kissing her cheek, he murmured, "I love you, Hermione Malfoy."

He didn't notice her eyes flying open at the statement or the small smile that played on her lips as she contemplated what it meant.

a/n- I hope you guys enjoy this installment. Once again, thank you to my faithful readers and to everyone who has left a review. You guys are wonderful and keep me going.

Chapter 9: It's Coming

Life in the Malfoy household had not been good lately. Hermione was now eight and a half months along and crabby as a kneazle in a bath. If Draco didn't know that polyjuice potion couldn't be used to depict pregnancy he would swear that Lavender Brown was wearing Hermione's skin. She wouldn't let him near her, she broke down into tears over the slightest perceived insult or anyone mentioning anything about a baby, and she had put an all out ban on having sex with him. Draco Malfoy was fairly certain that his wife hated him. What made him most certain of this fact was that every time he saw one of her friends or anyone she worked with, they all commented on how gracefully she handled pregnancy. Hermione either bottled up all her hormones for him or she just flat out hated him.

This was a complete turn around from her second trimester when she'd been so horny that Draco had been begging her for a chance to catch his breath. He'd loved having her that randy because it made him think that maybe their relationship could be repaired. Besides, he'd slowly been finding out that he was very, VERY attracted to Hermione, but especially when she was pregnant. Nothing was more beautiful or feminine looking than a pregnant woman. Hermione, especially, was gorgeous. The only weight she'd gained had been a little in her hips and breasts and the roundness of her belly. He wished she would gain a little more, and had gotten that wish around her seventh month, but every time he tried to compliment her, she only got angry. This meant that he was left with a permanent hard-on and a very bruised ego. Always before he could coax her into having sex with him with just a few touches. Now, she reacted as if his mere presence was disgusting to her.

Blaise Zabini told him that it was just her hormones, but he didn't think so. He'd never been around a pregnant woman before, so he couldn't know. He knew quite a few pregnant women at the moment and Hermione was definitely carrying herself with far more grace and dignity than any of the others. She also looked better. Her mother had invited him over for tea one afternoon and showed him pictures of herself when she'd been pregnant with Hermione and Chris, Hermione's older brother. Apparently dealing well with pregnancy ran in Hermione's family. Jane Granger was still very svelte and probably could have had five more children, like her sister, and remained that way. Draco hoped that Hermione was more inclined to have a large family rather than stop at two. She must have been if she'd been so happy about getting pregnant by Ron.

Thinking about Ron made Draco depressed. He couldn't be angry at him, but he was very jealous of the dead man. One afternoon, while looking for his old baby toys, Draco stumbled across a box of Hermione's that contained two pink baby jumpers, a pair of booties and a picture album. Knowing it wasn't his place, he still opened the album and looked through the pictures he found. He found three sonograms of a lumpy looking baby at three different stages of growth. Wizarding sonograms were much more advanced than muggle, so the pictures could be taken much earlier and with more clarity. He currently had several of his baby on display in his office. Turning the pages, he found pictures of Hermione in varying stages of pregnancy. In one she was struggling to put on a pair of muggle jeans and shoving the photographer out of the way laughing and in another she was in her old apartment knitting the baby booties he had found in the box. There were some of her and Harry and Ginny Weasley-Potter at what he supposed was the Weasley house for some kind of celebration. Harry and Ginny teasingly

pointed to the round bump on her belly, to which Hermione replied by laughing and then turning to the side, proudly showing off her stomach.

There were several more pictures, but the one that made his stomach lurch was the photograph of her and Ron. They were sitting on the overstuffed sofa he'd seen when he'd floored her and in the picture, Ron pulled her to him, planting a kiss on her temple and she grinned from ear to ear, looking up at him adoringly. Suddenly, he realized that the reason Ron wasn't in any of the other pictures was because he had been the one behind the camera.

They'd had an entire life built together that hadn't involved Draco one bit. They'd picked out furniture together, gone to family celebrations and discussed baby names together. Looking at her stomach, he surmised that the picture must have been taken shortly before he'd seen her on May Day last year. When he thought back to what he'd been doing around that time, it had involved meaningless, unsatisfying shags with women whose names he couldn't even remember. He didn't even want to remember the people he'd spent his time with last year, much less have pictures of them in an album in his attic.

This was the reason she had never sought him out during the year and a half that they were apart. She hadn't needed or wanted him. Why would she? He was shallow and superficial and he hung around with a bunch of snobs. She had moved on with her life and if Ron hadn't died, then he would have been forced to watch the three of them in Diagon Alley, looking like the story book family they were. Looking at the expression on Hermione's face, he got a lump in his throat because he hadn't seen it on her in almost two years. She had been truly happy and he couldn't begrudge her that.

Draco was currently sitting in his study with his head in his hands. Thinking about the pictures had brought him back to the fact that Hermione currently couldn't stand the sound of his voice. Maybe it was hormones, but he couldn't know because she hadn't gotten far enough in her last pregnancy to be sure. The day he saw her five months pregnant with someone else's baby had been a pivotal moment in his life, what if the day he walked out on her had been pivotal in hers? What if that had been the only thing she needed to prove to herself that he wasn't worth her time or tears?

He'd been incredibly cold and flippant that day. He'd been quick and to the point, hoping to avoid a scene. She had gotten tears in her eyes, but hadn't actually wept and at the time he'd been grateful, thinking he'd gotten off the hook. Now he wondered if it was because she'd been relieved that she hadn't had to do the dumping. He'd sent a house elf over to do the packing for him and left with a promise to owl her in a week or two. It was a promise he hadn't kept. In roughly half an hour, he dismantled a relationship that had taken five years to build. They'd seen each other a few times while out and after the first initially awkward meeting it seemed to Draco that things had gone back to the way they were before they had made a commitment. The first few times he'd gone out with other women had been momentarily exhilarating, but he always compared them to Hermione. In his mind he saw that period as inevitable and leading up to their final union. He envisioned the two of them moving into the manor, having children and Hermione continuing to dote on him as she had in the past.

Coming back to the present, Draco smiled wryly at the way all his careful planning had gone. Oh yes, they were married and yes, they were going to have children, but Hermione resented him and rightfully so. He'd selfishly let go of a relationship to satisfy his own curiosity and then when that didn't go as planned, he'd tricked and bullied her into marrying him. She was right when she said that what he'd had for her wasn't love. He'd cared about her, but mainly he'd been

obsessed with her. He cared more about how she made him happy than actually making sure that she was happy as well. As it was, she was happy to be pregnant and for some foolish reason, she still gave a damn about him, but she was certainly not happy. She'd adored Ron because from day one he'd been concerned about her well-being, treating her as if she were glass. Draco had made certain that she was tied to him first. He wanted to go back to his 23 year old self and not break-up with her. He wanted to make her feel as beautiful as she looked while she was pregnant. Most of all, he wanted to see her happy. He had lots of money and infinite resources, he could do it. If it meant that she left him and Malfoy Manor, then he would make it happen.

Lost in his melancholy thoughts he didn't hear the rapid footsteps outside his door until the handle pushed down and Hermione spilled into the room. He rushed over to her side and pulled her upright.

"What's wrong? What's happening? Are you okay?" He was panicked. Suddenly, Hermione let out a groan of pain and his feet and hers were surrounded by a clear fluid with a slight reddish tinge. Her water had broken.

"Draco, we have to get to St. Mungo's! Now!" Hermione doubled over again in pain and this time Draco picked her up in his strong arms.

"Is something wrong with the baby?" he asked in confusion. What if she lost this baby too? What if something happened to her or his little boy?

"Nothing is wrong with the baby, Draco! It's ready to be born."

"WHAT?? It can't come now you're not due for another two weeks!"

"Well, he's coming now, whether we're ready or not!" Hermione could feel her contraction subsiding, but she knew that if they didn't get to the hospital soon, she would give birth to their first child on the floor of Draco's study.

Not wasting anymore time, Draco carried Hermione over to his fireplace, put floo powder into the flames and shouted quite clearly, "St. Mungo's Hospital, Maternity ward!" Once he saw the green flames he disappeared into them, hoping with all his might that he didn't fail Hermione when she was in labor.

A/N- Thank you, thank you, thank you, THANK YOU to everyone who has left a review!

Chapter 10: He's here!

As soon as he got Hermione into a hospital room, Draco felt much better and more in control of the situation. She seemed much calmer, even though he knew she was in a tremendous amount of pain. She had refused the wizarding version of an epidural because she didn't want the baby to come out drugged. He was currently rubbing her back and trying to whisper soothing phrases to her, but he felt terribly inadequate.

The mediwitch came in and lifted the sheet draped over Hermione's lower half to see how far she had dilated. Making notes, she smiled reassuringly at the couple and left again. Her anger

at him apparently forgotten, she leaned back into him for comfort as her contraction subsided and her breathing returned to normal. Watching all the movements of her body, Draco was suddenly in awe of it. In a few hours, it would produce another human being into the world, one he had helped to create.

"I can't believe we're actually here," he said.

"I know," she panted. "I can't stand the pain, but I've never been so happy to feel such pain before in my life." She smiled up at him and it was so genuine, it almost broke his heart. He thought that she couldn't get anymore beautiful, but at that moment he knew that Helen of Troy wouldn't have been able to compare to her. Why did he have to notice now that he was about to lose her?

"I know that now isn't the time, but I'd really like to talk to you about something, Hermione."

"Mm?" She had her eyes closed and was enjoying the backrub he was giving her.

"I just want anything between us before the baby's born and I want you to know that I'd do anything to make you happy. You can live wherever you want, do whatever you wish and I'll do everything I can to make it happen, even if you want to leave the Manor." He felt her stiffen under his touch and heard the beeping of monitors, signifying that she was about to have another contraction.

Cautiously, she turned her head and gave him a quizzical look. "Why would I want to leave the Manor, Draco?"

Swallowing a lump in his throat, he steadied himself and replied, "Because you might be happier away from me. I'll do anything to get you to stay, but I know you aren't happy and that you don't love me the way that you used to, which is my fault." He clarified the last part so that she knew he wasn't blaming her for anything. Breathing again and blinking back tears, he continued, "If you would be happier someplace else, then I'll pay for you to live there. I just ask that you stay for the first three months so that I can get to know my son before we arrange a custody schedule."

Hermione studied him for a moment, biting her lip. "Oh, Draco..." Whatever she was about to say was cut off by a groan of pain and the monitor began beeping in earnest.

The mediwitch bustled into the room, pulling on her gloves and lifting the sheet, exclaimed, "Oh my goodness, Mrs. Malfoy! You are fully dilated and your baby has moved into the birth canal. I'm going to need you to bear down and push, but just lightly."

Hermione did as she was told and as the baby shifted, she gave another cry of pain and her breathing became more erratic. Draco held onto her hand and she squeezed it, looking at him with panic in her eyes. "It's okay," he told her, "I'm not going anywhere; I'll be here. You are doing so well." He kissed her forehead tenderly and they waited the contraction to subside. She only had a few moments of respite before the monitor began beeping again.

"Mrs. Malfoy, you'll have to push a little bit harder this time, the baby's shoulders are trying to make their way out. You'll feel some extra pressure, but you're almost done." Draco watched in horror as the woman shoved her whole hand into Hermione's vagina and turned the baby so that he would be at a better angle. As she did this, Hermione whimpered in pain.

"Sh, it's okay, love. I'm so sorry, you have to go through this." He pushed her sweat dampened hair back from her face and looked into her eyes.

"Oh, gods, DRACO!" Hermione screamed as she pushed and the baby slid its way down until the crown of the head was visible on the monitor. She nearly broke his hand, she was squeezing it so hard, but he didn't care. She screamed his name and wanted him to stay. When the last of that contraction subsided, tears were streaming down her face. "Oh, Draco, your poor hand! I'm so sorry."

Draco looked at his hand. It was black and blue and one of his fingers was probably broken, but he didn't care. "You mean to tell me that you're apologizing for my hand when you've got a baby coming out of you?" She actually smiled and they laughed. "You can break all of my fingers if you want, just come out of this okay."

The moment was tender, but didn't last long because another contraction came and the witch began barking orders. "I need you to bear down as hard as you possibly can and push! That's it! Keep going!"

Hermione grunted and strained and Draco watched as at first, blood poured copiously from her center and then a head with dark hair came into view followed by shoulders and a wiggling body. As the mediwitch pulled his son's body out of his wife Draco started crying. A nurse used a suction device to remove the mucus from the baby's eyes, nose and throat and the tiny Malfoy let out an indignant howl of rage at the cold temperature of the room. Once that was done, she gave the squirming child to his father so that he could hold him up for his mother to see. As soon as Hermione saw him, tears of relief streamed down her face as she reached for the tiny being.

"Hello there, little one. Would you like to meet your mummy? Wait until you see her, she's beautiful." Draco wrapped his child in the blanket provided by the nurse and placed his son in Hermione's arms and then enveloped them both in a hug. He was vaguely aware of a nurse taking a picture.

Hello angel. It's so nice to finally meet you," Hermione cooed. At the sound of her voice, the baby visibly jerked and looked up at her, trying his best to focus his grey eyes. The muffled voice he'd been hearing for the past few months was now finally clear as a bell. He looked in the direction of his parents a few moments before finally succumbing to sleep. It was hard work being born. As their baby drifted off to sleep, Hermione looked up at him with tears in her eyes and said, very purposefully, "I love you."

Four hours later, Draco was signing papers and watching his little family. Hermione had been cleaned up and given a healing potion that took care of most of the pain. They had gotten the baby to breast feed and once he had been given a clean bill of health, they were allowed to go home and have a healer check on them the next day.

"Okay, Mr. Malfoy, if you'll just fill out the birth certificate, I'll notarize it and you're done."

"Birth Certificate?" He and Hermione hadn't talked a lot about names. Taking the parchment over to her, he sat down next to her wheel chair and looked at her. Her eyelids were starting to droop, but she smiled sleepily at him.

"What shall we call him?"

"Well," Draco began, "What do you think of Scorpius?"

Hermione wrinkled her nose. "That's an awful name! What about Hugo?"

"Scorpius was my uncle's name, thank you. What unfortunate family member of yours was named Hugo?"

Hermione laughed, "No one, I just always enjoyed Hugo Weaving."

"Who?"

"He's an actor."

"Oh. Well, how about we name him after both of his grandfathers? Marcus Lucius Malfoy?"

"As much as I love my father, I never liked the name Marcus. How about we use his middle name? It was my grandfather's first name and it would kind of be a salute to you as well since it begins with a 'D'."

"Donovan Malfoy," Draco liked how it rolled off his tongue. "Donovan Lucius...Abraxas Malfoy. I always loved my own grandfather. How does that sound?"

"I think it's lovely, she said, snuggling baby Donovan closer to her chest. "Donovan Lucius Abraxas Malfoy, you are the most beautiful baby in the entire world! Did you know that?" Even though she was exhausted, Hermione couldn't have stopped smiling if someone had paid her and Draco could practically see her ripping open at the seams with joy.

They filled out the birth certificate and then Draco had them driven home. Once Donovan had been fed and changed, all three of them laid down together in the bed. Draco held Hermione who snuggled against his chest and held Donovan. They never got to discuss his offer, but Draco was too tired to care. Even if he didn't have answers, he had a son and his wife loved him. She'd said so herself. He didn't know what kind of love, but he believed her she said it and that was enough. He drifted off to sleep and if his house fell down around him, he would never notice as long as he had the two people he was holding with him.

I hope you guys find this chapter to your liking. I've never had a baby, so I don't know much about the birthing process. I hope this chapter shows how Hermione's feelings are changing. I've had writer's block with this story and "After Midnight". The next chapter shouldn't take as long to get up and the story is almost through. Thank you so much to everyone who has read and left a review! You guys are all very kind and it is such a thrill to read the nice things you say!

Chapter 11: The truth

It had been three months since they'd brought Donovan home and between all the visits from friends and relatives, the couple had had very little time to talk. It was now six in the evening and for once, no one was coming over and they had no where to be. The two of them sat in the sitting room while Donovan fed from his mother, relaxed and quiet. As Draco watched his son

nursing from Hermione he couldn't help the tug of possessive pride that he felt. In his opinion, the bald, pink, mottle-faced being in his wife's arms was the most beautiful and perfect child he'd ever seen. He loved the expression on Hermione's face as she looked down at her baby, softly speaking to him as his sleepy grey eyes struggled to stay open, almost as if he was listening to what his mother was saying and finding it very important. Finally, he'd had enough and Hermione adjusted her clothing before picking him up and walking him to his nursery to put him down for a bit.

Draco followed her and the two of them kissed their son's sleeping head before quietly exiting the room. As they entered the sitting room again, Draco saw a bitter sweet look on his wife's features. "What are you thinking about?" he asked, softly.

She looked at him as if she might tell him, but instead she shook her head. "It's nothing," she said sitting down on the lounge.

"No, tell me," he urged. "I love you, you can tell me anything."

"It's just that sometimes I wonder what Rosalyn would have been like at this age. I know I lost her fairly early on and that it was a long time ago, but I still think about her and wonder what life would be like with her."

"I can imagine. You were probably looking forward to her more than you were Donovan."

"Of course not! How can you say that?"

"I don't mean that you love Donovan less. I just mean that the circumstances surrounding your first pregnancy were much better. You were actually in love with the father and you didn't have the pressing worry of having to either marry someone you don't like or have your wand snapped in half. I've been thinking, Hermione, and the more I do, the more I know that you're happy with our son, but you aren't happy living here with me."

She opened her mouth to say something and he stopped her. "I'd do anything to get you to stay, but I won't stop you from leaving. I just want to see you smile like you used to and I know that I can't make you do that anymore. I never should have taken you for granted or treated you so badly, but I never should have tried to force you to be with me. I have three more houses in England and one in Ireland. If you don't want to live in one of the Malfoy properties, I'll buy you another one. The only thing I ask is that you let me see Donovan for at least an hour everyday and for a whole day on weekends. The law doesn't state that we are required to live together after the baby is born. You can go wherever you want and I'll make sure that you can get there."

Hermione just sat and stared at him a moment. She had tears in her eyes, but they didn't fall to her flushed cheeks. His heart was breaking, but he knew he had to let her go. He didn't want to listen to what she had to say, but he forced himself to stay. She had listened to his little speech all those years ago, he would afford her the same respect.

"Draco, there's something you need to know," she began. "I was never in love with Ron."

"Don't. Don't lie to me, Hermione. I saw the pictures. You've never looked at anyone other than me like that and you haven't looked at me like that since we last lived together."

"Yes, I loved Ron, but I was never in love with him! What I'm about to tell you, not even Ginny and Harry know. Ron and I knew things weren't going to work out between us and we decided

to call it off. We didn't tell anyone because it was right at Christmas and Mrs. Weasley was already heartbroken because Percy and Mr. Weasley had fought again and he wasn't going to come home for Christmas. Mrs. Weasley kept saying how wonderful it was that the whole family was together and she kept including me in that and we didn't feel like it was right to tell her and spoil her holiday. After all, we were still very best friends; we just couldn't make a sexual relationship work. We pretended everything was fine and then that night, we both had too much to drink and ended up, well, you know. After that night, we quietly started boxing his things up and tried to figure out a way to tell his parents when one morning I started throwing up. I went to St. Mungo's and they told me I was about to become a mummy. I was so happy. I knew that circumstances could have been better, but I just felt so happy. I went home to tell Ron and he didn't even flinch. He thought it was the greatest news he'd ever heard. We decided to stick the relationship out until the baby was born and those next months were wonderful. He was so attentive and excited and wonderful. He couldn't wait to meet his baby.

I know that this is awful to say, but I never even thought of you while I was pregnant. I did before. I mean, I'd been unhappy, but I did still love you. When I found out about the baby, it seemed like so many things that had been important before were meaningless. I didn't think of a lot of things during those months. It was like my life before the pregnancy just wasn't there. Even my relationship with Ron changed. I didn't know how we were going to handle becoming parents without being a couple, but he was so dedicated to me as a friend and to the baby, that I knew it would work out. We both wanted families and had always known that we wanted them and our families thought we were ideal for one another, that I really did start to believe it could be perfect."

Draco blinked his eyes as he felt his chest tighten. So she hadn't been 'in love' with Ron, but they'd had something wonderful, pleasant and magical. He felt slightly better that he didn't have to compete with a ghost for her affections. She was looking at him and he nodded his head that she could continue.

"You're correct that I wasn't happy here. However, I wasn't unhappy. I just didn't feel like I could trust you again. Then, went over my head and got rid of any other potential suitors and got the Minister of Magic to practically order me to marry you. I felt trapped. I also judged you unfairly. I still treated you as if you hadn't changed because I kept expecting you to turn back to your old ways as soon as you got bored. The last few months were mainly hormones, but I was taking a lot of my anger at being abandoned out on you. I felt guilty for being so happy about being pregnant again because I felt like I was betraying them. I was also angry at Ron for dying. I know it doesn't make sense, but I was angry that he had been so brave because if he hadn't, then maybe he and Rosalyn would still be here.

That brings me to your final thought. Even if Ron had lived, he and I would not have continued our relationship. I loved him as a dear friend, but my heart has always belonged to you. I forgot about it for awhile, but I can't deny that I don't want anyone but you. I wasn't happy because I didn't think that you loved me back. You've always been egotistical and self-centered and to a degree, you still are. I meant it though, when I said that you were worth the high maintenance. I'm touched by your offer, and to be honest, that's all I ever needed to know. I needed to know that my happiness was a priority for you. I don't want to live anywhere else but with you. I want to be a family with you and Donovan and I don't want anything to change from these past three months. I love you, Draco and I think I always will."

When she was done, Draco pulled her close and held her tight against him. He knew he was probably crushing her as the tears rolled from his eyes, but she didn't complain and he needed

to feel her against him. He never wanted to let go of her. She was petting his hair and pushing it back from his forehead, kissing him lightly on the top of his head as she perched on his lap. She was staying and she still loved him. He wanted to take a seven year long break from the world and just lie there with her in his arms.

"Draco," she said softly, "let's go to bed, love." He let out a choked laugh at the simplicity of her statement and what it meant. They were going to their bed to sleep and she would be there in the morning when he woke up. He knew that even though it hadn't worked out the way he saw his life going, he had everything he wanted and he appreciated it all the more because he knew what it was like to go without it. Picking his wife up, he carried her to their bed and lay down with her, gazing into her eyes. As he watched her fall asleep, he thought of how lucky it was that he'd seen her that day and how lucky it was that he had his son to thank for the woman asleep in his arms. Draco fell asleep, not knowing what the future was going to bring, but being sure that he would do absolutely anything to make sure that his wife and son were happy in it.

A/N- THANK YOU so much to everyone who left a review! This is my first try at writing an ending and I hope it is satisfactory. Thank you to everyone who has read my stories and said kind, encouraging things about them. I've truly enjoyed you all!